



Live from Brussels - A YMCA Europe Brussels Newsletter



INTERESTING TIMES

THIS MONTH

Busy Times

by Ilenia Ventroni

Autumn is probably the busiest time in Brussels, both from the fundraising and from the advocacy point of view. Many organizations organize events where the intuitions and other youth organizations are present, and we will participate to as many as possible to make sure that our voice gets heard.

New advocacy work

Our advocacy work will start off with the briefing of the Youth Policy Group on the next engagements: the Policy Papers, the European Youth Forum Elections and the Council of Members of the YFJ. We will also participate to several events, as mentioned, and we will report on one of them in this issue to give a brief example of our engagements: to read that, see here on the side column on [page 1](#). The Brussels Office was also present at the Global Center of Excellence Conference in Houston, Texas. Where we presented the work done until now with refugees and migrants, and our commitment to continue to

do so in Europe. You can find more about this here on [page 2](#) of this issue. We will dedicate some space of this issue to a national initiative: the Youth Ambassadors programme of YMCA England and Wales. You can find more about this at [page 2](#) of this issue!

Projects and Programmes

October is a much quieter time for deadlines! However, that does not mean that there are no interesting opportunities. See [page 3](#) for more information on the available calls. Some of them are not the usual Erasmus+ Call, so if you want to know how to apply, please contact us at ilenia@ymaceurope.com.



Always on the spot

The Brussels Office of YMCA Europe was invited to the SOS Children's Village International event dedicated to "Supporting Young People Leaving Care into Employment: Key Lessons from Research and Practice". The event saw the participation of Officials from the Directorate General for Employment and regarding Youth Policy of the European Commission, representatives from the European Social Platform and from the European Anti-Poverty Network. We were able to connect to these very important actors who will be crucial for our work regarding Youth Empowerment and Youth Unemployment.

The Youth Ambassadors Programme

by Ilenia Ventroni

A very important part of the Brussels Office work is to bring you closer to the advocacy initiatives of your fellow member movements. As a part of that, we will present to you today an initiative of YMCA England and YMCA Wales called the Youth Ambassadors Programme.

Youth Ambassadors are young people between the age of 18 and 30 within a YMCA, who would like to represent YMCA England and Wales abroad and to take up several training opportunities. Young people can get into the programme through so called "gateway activities": national conferences, policy events, media campaigns and the likes. Once participating in these activities, young people are invited to participate into the Youth Ambassadors Programme.

Typical activities involve: training and networking events to meet other Ambassadors, priority on all national and international activities, opportunities to work with media, politicians and international YMCAs.. One of the activities for example is the Youth Homeless Parliament, reserved to

people who are or have experienced homelessness and want to influence policy on the issue. The Programme aims at having a good number of young people who have had their life impacted by YMCA to be able to represent it around the nation and abroad. This contributes to the educational process of the youths involved, increases their competencies and confidence, and get more young people involved in policy and advocacy. Some interesting stories can help to better understand.

Jerahl Hall is an YMCA Youth Ambassador from the North Staffordshire YMCA. Among other activities he has participated into the YMCA Global Programme Innovation Camp in Switzerland. Along with several youths from other 23 countries, Jerahl has been involved in advocacy training resulting in writing bills and policy documents, intercultural activities and learning about initiatives like the Australian Youth Parliament.

Another Youth Ambassador, Naomi Singh-Chahar, has participated to the Girls Education Forum (GEF) in the Queen



Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London. The Girls Education Challenge (GEC) is a working towards ensuring ALL girls not only receive an education but stay in education and receive the help they need to succeed. At the event she participated in several workshops, among which one on Reaching Disabled Girls, and Raising Self Esteem to Unlock Potential: the workshops underlined how important it is to give confidence and strength to the girls to enable them to take charge of their lives and pursue education and healthy lives. YMCA England and Wales are aiming at having 50 young people as Youth Ambassadors by 2017. The Youth Ambassadors Programme is a great tool for advocacy and youth empowerment, and we commend the high quality and the commitment of the participants.



PARTNERING FOR EQUITY

2016 Global Centers of Excellence Network Event
Houston, Texas



The GCE Conference in Houston

by Ilenia Ventroni

On September 28, 29 and 30 the Brussels Office was invited in Houston, Texas, by the Y of the USA, to participate to the Global Centers of Excellence Network: Partnering for Equity. The aim of the Conference was to further work in the context of equity and inclusion for underserved communities, capacity-building for equity, health equity, and equity for opportunity youth. In this context, the Conference offered 22 workshops, among which one was led by the Brussels Office, called "Growing Together, Learning from Each Other", dedicated to the work of European YMCAs with refugees and migrants. American YMCAs were very interested in our work in this field, and we

worked together on ways in which European and American YMCAs can cooperate on this issue. We made meaningful contact with a lot of local YMCAs interested in cooperating with us, and we will keep you definitely updated on that.

The Global Centers of Excellence Network has also voted on renaming itself as the Diversity, Inclusion and Global Innovation Network (or DIG Innovation Network). This will reflect much better the focus of the forum, where the main topics discussed touched on diversity management and services to underserved communities, like newcomers. We were able to observe the great work of the YMCA

Houston International center, a beacon of great services and emotional support for many newcomers coming from very difficult situations, like human trafficking. The main aim of the center is to ensure self-reliance of New Americans, from the arrival into the country until complete self-sufficiency is achieved. This is a very worthy model for the work we are starting in Europe, and it was a greatly enriching experience to be able to observe it that close. If you would like more information on how to partner with the Y for equity and work with newcomers, contact us at: ilenia@ymcaeurope.com.

Here you will be able to find all relevant calls for proposals open at the moment. If you have any question on them, **feel free to contact us** and we will help you out!

Funding Opportunities

	What is it?	Deadline	Link
<i>Open call for Visegrad Fund's Small grants</i>	The International Visegrad Fund is an international organization, founded by the governments of the Visegrad Group (V4) countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland, and the Slovak Republic). Grant support is given to original projects in the areas of culture, science and research, youth exchanges, crossborder cooperation and tourism promotion.	December 1 2016	http://visegradfund.org/grants/standard-grants/
<i>CREATIVE EUROPE Culture Sub-programme SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROJECTS</i>	Cultural and/or audio-visual activities to support the integration of refugees by letting EU citizens and refugees work together to discover, learn from and understand the values and cultures of both populations. Projects can promote joint creation and performances of for example original theatre, music, audio-visual works and street performances. Projects should foster the identification of specific artistic skills of refugees, use the talents of the refugee population, or enhance their abilities for a better integration in the social life and labour market.	23 November 2016 - 12:00 (CET/CEST, Brussels time)	http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/funding/support-european-cooperation-projects-2017_en
<i>EPIM Call for Proposals Sub-fund on long-term prospects and protection of children and youth on the move in Europe</i>	Strengthen the collaboration among stakeholders in child's rights and migration areas; Foster linkages between national- and EU-level advocacy to detect and highlight challenges of implementation as well as promising policy in Member States; Promote promising practices in Member States to be adapted and scaled up regarding guardianship, child supportive multi-dimensional services, Advocate for: ☑ protection and access to rights not determined by the formal legal status of the child or youth; ☑ A protection chain completed from the country of origin, on the route to and at the point of arrival in Europe; ☑ Family unity is protected and quality of care is ensured; ☑ EU funding is allocated to encourage the provision of long-term perspectives for children and youth in Europe	11 November 2016	http://www.epim.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CfP-ChildrenAndYouth1.pdf
<i>Pilot Activity- European Youth Foundation</i>	National level grassroots action aimed at solving a specific issue	Anytime	Check all the info at http://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/pilot-activity